

Is That Word Dead or Alive?

by Richard E. Bieber

We need a word from God that is alive and powerful, one that shakes us out of our apathy and forces us to choose.

Scripture: John 6:63, John 6:66-67, 1 Corinthians 4:19

Topics: "Holy Spirit", "Revival"

Description

Richard E. Bieber shares a powerful story of a man who was miraculously healed and set free to speak by a stranger connected to the Source of all freedom, emphasizing the difference between dead religious words and living words anointed by the Spirit of God. He challenges listeners to discern whether the words they hear are truly from God by examining if they move them out of their comfort zones or merely allow them to stay in their routines. Bieber urges for a revival of churches through receiving and acting on living words from God that shake believers out of apathy and lead to transformation and faith.

Transcript

A man came home from work one day. His wife gave him a kiss and started telling him how her day went. When it came time for him to respond, he opened his mouth, and nothing came out. He could not speak. Something inside him was paralyzed.

They took the man to his doctor who shook his head and sent him to a specialist. The specialist ordered an MRI and an EEG. Nothing showed. They heard of a church where they practiced exorcism and healing. "In the name of Jesus, come out!" Nothing. "In the name of Jesus, speak!" Nothing. They hovered over the man for an hour. Shook him. Laid hands on him. Quoted scripture over him. Nothing.

One summer evening, as the man sat on a bench in the park by the river's edge, a stranger came and sat down beside him. The stranger asked him a question. The man made signs with his hands to indicate that he could not speak. The stranger sat there in silence for a while, looking at the ground. Then he stood up, and said in a quiet voice, hardly above a whisper, "I want you to know that the Lord Jesus has now set you free."

The man looked up, opened his mouth, and spoke for the first time in months, giving thanks to God.

Bible quotes didn't do it. Hollering didn't do it. Preaching didn't do it. But a few words from a man who was connected to the Source of all freedom restored this man to wholeness.

"It is the Spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail;
the words that I have spoken to you are Spirit and life."

John 6:63

There are words that are flesh, and there are words that are Spirit.

There are words that are merely religious, and there are words that are truly holy.

There are words that are empty, and there are words that are charged with the power of God.

The Kingdom of God is not talk but power. I Corinthians 4:19

So here's the question we need to ask ourselves whenever we hear words that claim to be from God: Is that word dead or alive?

"It is the Spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail;
the words that I have spoken to you are Spirit and life."

So how can we tell whether the words that we are hearing are truly coming from the heart of God, or whether it's just some more dead religious talk?

Here's the test:

A dead word lets you stay in your rut. It may be eloquent. It may sound like wisdom. It may be full of religious ideas. But it doesn't move you one inch away from your comfortable routine, your habitual way of looking at things. You went to church. You sang some hymns and heard some God-talk, and you went away unchanged.

A living word, a word anointed by the Spirit of God, does not allow you to keep sleepwalking through life. It follows you around and keeps bugging you, until you either get out of your rut and start walking with God; or you throw up your hands and say, "This is a hard saying, who can listen to it?" and walk away.

After this many of his disciples drew back and no longer went about with him.

John 6:66

Why did these people draw back and walk away?

They were offended by the living word.

Jesus said to the twelve, "Will you also go away?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

John 6:67-68

Why did these men stick it out?

Because the same living word that drove the others away drew these men into a life of faith and power.

What we need in our churches, what I need in my life, and you need in yours, is a word from God that is so alive that it shakes us out of our apathy and forces us to choose. We need a word from God that keeps speaking to us long after we leave the assembly. A word that wakes us up in the night. A word that meets us when we get up in the morning and follows us through the day. A word that sustains us like bread, refreshes us like water.

Once that word comes alive in our churches, in your life and mine, we will see things that we may not have seen in a long while. Some of us will be transformed by that word and turned into laborers in the Vineyard. Some of us will be offended by that word and driven away. But none of us will be immune to its power.

But how do we get there? When are we going to start hearing such a word that will move us out of our apathy, and get us going in one direction or another?

You may be thinking, "You're the guy writing these words. Aren't you supposed to be giving us that word? If you can't come up with it, what are we supposed to do?"

That's partly true. Whoever has the audacity to presume to speak or write words that are presented as from God should either put up or shut up.

On the other hand, no human being, whether they're a writer, preacher, bishop, or pope can make it happen. Only God can make it happen. And it seems that God breaks

through our apathy and begins to speak, only when there's someone around with a listening ear. The fire of God only seems to come down and touch the earth when there's already a little spark somewhere --- whether it's a Moses or Elijah or a handful of disciples.

"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life; and we have believed, and have come to know, that you are the Holy One of God."

Give us a handful of souls who are dissatisfied with things as they are, who keep crying out to God --- not merely complaining, but crying out to God, and soon the Lord Jesus causes his voice to be heard.

If only a handful of us catch fire with a living word, the whole picture changes. Our churches will have an impact on the world around them that will bless many lives.

So how can we become the spark that brings down the fire of the living word into our fellowships? Three simple steps:

Ask for it.

Receive it.

Act on it.

Ask for it.

Ask God to give us a living word, a word that comes to us like fire and shakes us out of our slumber. A word that follows us around and keeps bugging us. A word that stays alive in us long after we leave the assembly.

Unto thee will I cry, O Lord, my Rock.

Be not silent to me, lest if thou be silent to me,

I become like them that go down into the pit.

Psalm 28

Receive it.

Let the word get down past our ears and our mouths into our hearts. Often a word from the Lord is already present, waiting to be received. Like, "Go, get reconciled!" or "Pray for that enemy," or "Forgive that brother."

Sometimes it burns like fire at the door of my heart. Yet it won't do me any good unless I open up and take it down into my heart and hold on to it.

Act on it.

The main reason why we don't catch fire when the word comes near is that we keep thinking about it and thinking about it, and thinking about it --- but never get around to doing it!

I know God wants me to make that phone call. I know it's time to make that simple change in my routine. Somehow I keep putting it off. But the minute I act on it I catch fire with the living word.

We think of all the things our churches seem to need in order to grow. They need only one thing. Once that need is met, everything else takes care of itself. They need a living word from God --- both when we're together in the assembly and when we are scattered out in the world.

So let's ask for it in our daily prayers.

Let's receive it every time we hear a word which we know is from God.

And when we are clear about what God wants us to do, to do it without delay.

"It is the Spirit that gives life, the flesh is of no avail;

the words that I have spoken to you are Spirit and life."

Those words are Spirit and life. But they do me no good --- until I receive them into my heart and act on them.

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